IOWA University Libraries – Main Library Gallery

☰ **MENU**

Mary Sue Coleman (1995-2002)

The first woman to serve as president of the University of Iowa, Mary Sue Coleman was a leading advocate of expanded research opportunities. At a time of state budgetary challenges, her seven-year tenure saw the institution's research budget and its annual general fund-raising nearly double in size.

A biochemist, Coleman earned her bachelor's degree in chemistry at Grinnell College and her PhD in biochemistry at the University of North Carolina. Before coming to Iowa, she was a member of the faculty at the University of Kentucky, and later held academic positions at the University of North Carolina and the University of New Mexico. She became president of the University of Michigan in 2002, retiring in 2014. In 2015, she was appointed to the University of Denver Board of Trustees and in 2016 became president of the Association of American Universities.

Coleman has been a member or chair of scientific review panels for the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, and the editorial board of the Journal of Biological Chemistry. She is an elected Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

A Kentucky native, Mary Sue Wilson was born on Oct. 2, 1943. Her family moved to Cedar Falls, Iowa, where she graduated from high school. She married Kenneth Coleman, a political scientist, and they have one son.

Oil on canvas by Ellen Cooper, 2018

Mary Sue Coleman and Kenneth Coleman, Presidential Portraits Photographs Collection, University of Iowa Archives.

Information Arcade classroom, Main Library, 2003, photo by Kirk Murray for the University of Iowa.

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